

P-16 COUNCIL REPORT

Information:

At its March 20 meeting, the P-16 Council considered an array of statewide projects to improve teacher quality, coordination of high school and college curricula, and the transition of students from high school to college.

Council members endorsed the state Department of Education's Teacher Data System Improvement Project. The system will use web technology to integrate and make accessible the various databases distributed throughout several units of the Kentucky Department of Education. Led by Stephen Clements of the University of Kentucky, the project steering committee includes staff from the KDE, the Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education, as well as members of other agencies at all levels of K-12 education. The data system will help agencies and researchers monitor teacher quality and supply, track student transition to postsecondary education, recruit minority teachers, and correlate performance in the K-12 curriculum with postsecondary performance.

Kentucky is seeking funding from two federal programs. At the March P-16 Council meeting, KDE, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and Education Professional Standards Board staff reported on preparation of a Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement state grant. The funding would be used to improve the training and professional development of teachers, provide accountability for teacher preparation programs through data collection, and provide seed money for local P-16 councils. In addition, staff from the CPE, KDE, and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, with assistance from postsecondary faculty, are preparing a statewide GEAR-UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant. The grant will be used to improve the ability of middle schools with large numbers of economically disadvantaged students to prepare these students for college.

The P-16 Literacy and Mathematics Alignment Teams held their first meetings in March. CPE member Peggy Bertelsman is chairing the Literacy Alignment Team, and KBE (and P-16 Council) member Lydia Carol Gabbard is chairing the Mathematics Alignment Team. The teams are composed of representatives from each public university, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities, and six teachers or administrators from Kentucky schools. The groups will identify what students need to know and be able to do to be ready for college.

P-16 Council members addressed several measures to increase successful passage from high school to college. They endorsed a statewide conference requested by the presidents of the state institutions on the best ways to provide remedial education. They also reviewed and endorsed a proposal for a

summer institute to help school counselors raise student and family expectations for achievement and college-going. Counselors would also assist teachers in preparing and motivating students for college. P-16 Council members also reviewed revisions to the administrative regulation outlining admission guidelines to postsecondary institutions, which was documented at the March CPE meeting. Council members received a letter from Acting Commissioner Kevin M. Noland to Kentucky's high school principals advising them of research correlating a fourth year of high school mathematics with successful completion of a baccalaureate degree.

The P-16 Council is responding to the growing interest in forming local councils. Council members recognize the importance of statewide standards of teaching quality and student performance and the need to develop coherent education policy throughout the system. At the same time, local organizational structures have the flexibility to address specific problems and needs of limited geographical scope. The staff has written to the Chief Academic Officers of the public universities and to the president of the independent college association asking them to identify their three to five most effective partnership activities and to envision ideal P-16 partnerships for their areas of the state. As we receive information from the institutions, the P-16 Council will consider how to establish local councils.

Since September, P-16 Council meetings have featured exemplary local partnership programs and structures. In March, Council members heard a presentation on The Renaissance Learning Program, an after-school enriched learning project at Johnson Elementary School in Lexington. Working with The Community School That Never Closes Inc., Georgetown College, and several local arts organizations, the program is a model of focused effort among public and private institutions and agencies required to effect education reform.

CPE member Shirley Menendez has been reappointed by Council Chair Charles Whitehead to the P-16 Council for a three-year term.

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